

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1362

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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UNCLAS ST JOHNS 093

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS ENRG PINT CA

SUBJECT CHURCHILL FALLS POWER

REF STJOHNS 090

1. NFLD ENERGY MINISTER JOHN CROSBIE HAS RETURNED, BRISTLING, FROM HIS QUEBEC CITY MEETING WITH PQ NATURAL RESOURCES MINISTER JEAN COURNOYER WHERE THE TWO MINISTERS DISCUSSED NFLD'S REQUEST TO PURCHASE 600 MW OF POWER FROM THE CHURCHILL FALLS GENERATING PLANT IN ADDITION TO 300 MW NFLD HAS A RIGHT TO RECALL. CROSBIE'S ANGER STEMMED FROM COURNOYER'S ADAMACY IN CONTINUING TO INSIST ON NFLD'S CESSION OF 7500 SQUARE MILES OF SOUTHERN LABRADOR (REFTEL) AND FROM HIS BREACHING WHAT CROSBIE SAID WAS AN UNDERSTANDING THAT NEITHER MINISTER WOULD REVEAL DETAILS OF ON-GOING NEGOTIATIONS TO THE MEDIA.

2. PREMIER MOORES ADDRESSED NFLD HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY APR 29 AND HINTED THAT, AS LAST RESORT, NFLD MIGHT PULL THE PLUG
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AT CHURCHILL FALLS AND MIGHT BE FORCED TO "SUGGEST TO THE

OLYMPIC COMMITTEE THAT THEY GET ENOUGH CANDLES TO HOLD THEIR EVENTS" IN MONTREAL THIS SUMMER. AMID DESK-THUMPING SOUNDS OF APPROVAL FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE HOUSE, CROSBIE ADDED HIS COMMENTS TO PREMIER'S AND STATED THAT "NFLD IS NOT PREPARED TO SELL ONE SQUARE INCH OF LABRADOR TERRITORY" EVEN IF EVERYONE IN THE PROVINCE STARVES TO DEATH AND ALL THE LIGHTS HERE ARE OFF. IF THE "QUEBECWOLF" (PARAPHRASING AN OLD ANTI-CONFEDERATION SONG) THINKS IT HAS NFLD BY THE NECK, CROSBIE CONCLUDED, IT HAD BETTER THINK AGAIN.

3. MOORES INDICATED THAT HE WOULD BE NEGOTIATING FURTHER ON CHURCHILL FALLS POWER WITH PREMIER BOURASSA.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH IMPLIED THREAT TO PULL THE PLUG AT CHURCHILL FALLS WAS PROBABLY NOTHING MORE THAN RHETORIC, THERE IS NO RPT NO WILLINGNESS HERE EVEN TO CONTEMPLATE ANY CESSION OF LABRADOR TERRITORY TO PQ. THE 1927 FIXING OF LABRADOR'S BOUNDARIES BY UK'S PRIVY COUNCIL WAS PROBABLY ONLY TIME NFLD EVER PREVAILED OVER PQ IN A DISAGREEMENT OR A NEGOTIATION AND HAS EVER SINCE BEEN SOURCE OF GREAT SATISFACTION TO NEWFOUNDLANDERS. IF PRIVY COUNCIL DECISION STILL RANKLES IN PQ MOST NEWFOUNDLANDERS ARE PROBABLY GLAD AND HOPE THAT THEIR NEIGHBORING PROVINCE, WHICH THEY SEE AS GRASPING AND AVARICIOUS, IS EATING ITS HEART OUT.
MOORE

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